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Andrew Rothstein
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Is Labour Democratic?

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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'MODERATES' OR SOCIALISTS AT BLACKPOOL?

'When I read in the bourgeois newspapers praise of something I have said or done, I look at myself in the glass and say: "August, you old ass, what stupidity have you committed?" '

Statement attributed to AUGUST BEBEL (1840-1913), leader of the old German Social-Democratic Labour Party.

'May the devil admire me!'
Old Irish saying.

September 12, 1975

Mrs Thatcher has done it again. Her anxiety to prove that a Tory lady is as good a diehard as a man (as though the public doesn't know the blue-hatted brigade) showed itself for the first time on the eve of the European Security Conference—though her imitation of Lord Curzon, Austen Chamberlain and Ernest Bevin, on July 26, sounded less like their roars than the shrill scream of a steam whistle out of control. She denounced the Soviet Union as brutal and untrustworthy and spending too much on arms. She sneered at detente as merely 'a fine word', and anticipated that Helsinki would mean a 'flood of words emanating from a summit conference.' She demanded that the Soviet Union should change its policies at home as a condition for any 'relaxation of tension'. In short, while doing her best to spoil the present government's chances of helping to reach agreement at Helsinki, she displayed the face of traditional Tory sabotage of peace in all its ugliness. No wonder her own friends were embarrassed. The *Times* front page story called her outburst 'astonishing', and thought that 'her emergence as a British hawk seems unlikely to impress' President Ford and Canadian Premier Trudeau, whom she was trying to please. On August 2 the *Times* gave her a severe lecture: 'She has not yet acquired sufficient standing in foreign affairs . . . she is lacking in experience and her knowledge is still incomplete . . . it would be as well to move with modesty, caution and restraint' (so long as she is not Prime Minister!). In short, Mrs Thatcher had missed an opportunity of holding her tongue, as the French say.

Her Offer to the Right Wing

On September 8, anticipating the policy debates at the Labour Party Conference this month, she turned her vituperative skill at

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Aberdeen against the left wing there. They represented 'growing extremism'. Their aim was 'destruction of the individual's freedom to make his own decision,' and 'extension of state control to every aspect of our lives.' They would 'destroy all chances of success' when 'the nation is fighting for its life.' For this extremism the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party was 'becoming a power house.' However, these attacks were particularly revealing, less for their content—after all, Winston Churchill used much the same language in the post-war election thirty years ago—than for the offer which Mrs Thatcher made. If the government wanted Conservative support for its anti-inflation policies—i.e. for cuts in railways, in housing, education and other social services—it must shake off its left wing. It would be impossible for the Conservative opposition to go on giving 'general support' to such a government. She even shed a tear over Mr Wilson being 'condemned to forge ahead' with a major programme of nationalisation. And she was deeply moved, above all, at 'moderate Labour MPs being hounded in their constituencies and even ejected from their seats' because 'they refuse to mouth the slogans of the extreme left.' In this peroration she reverted, in fact, to the genuine bargain which the Newham Tories had prematurely offered to Reg Prentice on July 26 if he refused to comply with the wishes of his Constituency Party. They were made to 'pipe down' at the time—but only because the time was not ripe.

Tories Back Wilson against Marxism

In this case, naturally, the *Times* did not censure Mrs Thatcher, because her gesture to Harold Wilson has been a major theme of Tory propaganda for months past. Indeed, the *Times* itself—in the stress of the referendum campaign—had declared (March 27 this year): 'It is very important for Britain's political balance that Mr Wilson, Mr Healey, Mr Callaghan and Mr Jenkins should prevail and that Mr Benn, Mr Shore, Mr Mikardo and the *Tribune* group should be defeated.' Readers of this journal in particular will recall the chorus of triumph in the Tory press when that happened, and the swelling cry that broke out for a coalition of 'moderate elements' of the Labour and Tory parties, with or without Liberal make-weights, and within or without a coalition government. When this began to seem impracticable, a vigorous discussion broke out—again among the Tories—about electoral reform by some form of proportional representation, so as to make such a coalition possible. And all the time there has been a constant outcry in the Tory press and on the BBC—such as the diatribes by Lord Shawcross about

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'Marxists' who have 'infiltrated the Labour Party', which before long 'will find itself dominated' by them, unless there is 'a split between the Labour Party social democrats and the Marxists' (BBC, August 16, 1975). Lord Shawcross is a former Labour Attorney-General, but of course his tirades meet with plenty of sympathetic echoes among Mr Wilson's colleagues themselves. Such was the clarion call to the rank and file from Defence Secretary Mason (September 4) to conduct an all-out war on 'infiltrators . . . stifle and frustrate their anti-democratic activities at source.' Such, too, was Home Secretary Jenkins's denunciation, on September 11 at Newham, of the 'extremists' who want 'an attempt at salvation through chaos . . . but who have recently come into the Labour Party,' and so on, *ad nauseam*.

What Do 'Infiltrators' Want?

In short, neither right-wing Labour leaders—or 'moderates', if they prefer the title—nor their would-be, only-too-willing ally, Mrs Thatcher and her diehards, believe that rank and file trade unionists and other socialist members of the Labour Party can possibly be pressing for socialist measures, aiming to carry out the declared programme of the Labour Party, unless they are 'infiltrators'. Look at the agenda for the Blackpool Labour Party Conference. When the AUEW's Engineering Section says that planning of wages and salaries requires as a precondition that 'the major means of production, distribution and exchange are socially controlled', that is 'infiltration'. Where thirty affiliated bodies call for public ownership of 'the commanding heights of the economy', nationalising banks, finance companies and insurance companies first but also the biggest industrial monopolies, that is 'extremism'. So is the demand by engineers, textile workers and leather workers for import or price controls, and the insistence by many others on extensive cuts in armaments ('defence') expenditures. Yet look, too, at what the Labour Party Conference in 1973 committed both 'moderates' and 'extremists' to support, by the programme it adopted when the Tories were in office (my italics):

> Only direct control, *through ownership*, of a substantial and vital sector of the growth industries, mainly in manufacturing, which hold the key to investment performance, will allow a Labour government of the future to achieve its essential planning objectives in the national interest (p 30).

> For the larger companies—and especially the 100 or so which now dominate the economy—we shall employ the full weaponry of price con-

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> trols. . . . We shall also develop effective controls at retail level. . . . Our price controls will also be used to curb those profits which we consider to be excessive, or which arise from the abuse of industrial and market strength. . . . *Workers can only be expected to moderate their expectations on money wages if firm action is being taken to hold down the cost of living* (pp 23-24).

> The banks and insurance companies represent a tremendous concentration of power, with ramifications throughout the whole of British industry. Financial institutions own over one-third of all equity. *This power is unacceptable* because there is no public accountability or control over its use (p 35).

> A Labour government in the 1970s should seek to reduce our defence spending to bring us into line with the existing burden carried by our European allies. . . . It would save Britain approximately £600 million a year. . . . *A Labour government, as a first step, will seek the removal of American Polaris bases from Britain* (pp 102-3).

Only those pledges (among many others) which were unconditional are quoted here. So who are the 'extremists'? Those who are demanding fulfilment of these promises, or those who have the support of the Tories, and are offered still more, for not fulfilling them? The article in this issue on the September TUC, by the President of the Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, draws a convincing picture of what the policy of the so-called 'moderates' has produced in practice.

Left and Right

These few examples of pledges undertaken in 1973 and broken in 1974-75 (particularly the first) are but different aspects of the general pledge of a socialist goal which was put at the very head and forefront of the programme, and which has been more quoted of late than any other statement of the kind since the fight over 'Clause 4' many years ago: 'To bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families.'

And that certainly *was* a step towards Marxism. Shifting the balance of power fundamentally and irreversibly *towards* the working people means shifting it *away* from the capitalists—and that was the aim of the *Communist Manifesto* written by Marx and Engels over a century ago: 'to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.' Shifting the balance of wealth away from the capitalists is an echo of the second step which Marx and Engels envisaged: 'The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie.' So, once again, who are the 'infiltrators'? Those who take the 1973 declaration of

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Labour's basic socialist goals, lying 'at the very heart of our policies', as a serious pledge, or those who lay low at the time, like Brer Rabbit 'sayin' nuffin'', and have reappeared with their violent opposition after a Labour government has come back into office?

What 'Left' and 'Right' Mean

Of course the struggle between left and right in the Labour Party has gone on ever since 1918 when, by accepting the principle of individual membership, it admitted the possibility of workers at the point of exploitation pressing their rebellion upon parliamentarians and trade union leaders who tended to forget that the capitalists were the workers' enemies. Again and again, over the fifty-three years of existence of *Labour Monthly*, this fact has been recalled. Its essential element is that 'left' and 'right' are only words of convenience, meaning 'those who stand for socialism, i.e. taking political power and the means of creating wealth for the working people and away from the capitalists', and 'those who want the capitalists to retain the commanding heights, both in economic and in ultimate political power.' Yet perhaps it has never been so obvious as it is now when during the referendum and ever since there has appeared the movement towards a practical combination of right-wing Labour and Toryism.

Who are the Social Democrats?

The fashionable title in which that combination has been disguised in later years has been 'a mixed economy', an economy in which 80 per cent of the means of production and 100 per cent of the means of exchange are owned by capitalist monopolies, 'mixed with' (that is, supported by) a state which in Britain owns the remaining 20 per cent of the means of production—coal, rail and part of transport. But this insistence on the mixed economy has produced a somersault in terminology which would be ludicrous if it were not a little disgusting. While denouncing their opponents as 'Marxists' and 'extremists', the advocates of a mixed economy have begun calling themselves 'social democrats'—and the capitalist spokesmen, in their zeal to support such potential allies, have endorsed the title. 'Social democracy involves the acceptance of a mixed economy,' roundly proclaimed one who called himself a social democratic member of the Labour Party of long standing (Mr Ashley Bramall, writing from London's County Hall to the *Times*, October 30, 1974). Lord Chalfont, once a Labour minister, found bizarre the existence in a single party of Marxists and 'social democrats committed to a

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mixed-economy, free-enterprise political system' (*Times*, December 23, 1974). The 'Social Democratic Alliance' is what the organisation of Labour Party members formed this year to combat the 'extremists' calls itself: and the title has become an accepted formula in parliamentary politics.

Social-Democrats in History

Yet there *have* been Social-Democrats very much in British politics before—and they, too, were denounced as extremists in their day. Listen to Harry Quelch, one of their most prominent spokesmen known throughout the British and international socialist movement:

> The Social-Democratic Federation is a militant socialist organisation. . . . Its object is the realisation of socialism—the emancipation of the working class from its present subjection to the capitalist class. The means by which it seeks to attain that end are: agitation, education and the organisation of the working class into a class-conscious political party—that is a party clearly conscious of the present position of the workers as a subject class . . . and clearly conscious of its duty and mission to free them from that position by the conquest of all the powers of the state, and by making all the means of production collective common property, to be used for the benefit of all instead of for the profit of a class. (*The Social-Democratic Federation: Its Object, its Principles and its Work*, 1905)

What a declaration of extremism! In fact, the Labour Party, formed next year, was a 'first step' towards the class-conscious organisation —Lenin for that very reason in 1908 supported its acceptance into the old pre-1914 International. The struggle of the socialists in the Labour Party today, in particular those who want to see the declaration of the 1973 Programme, quoted above, put into practice, would, if successful, be a 'second step' towards the kind of party which the SDF then wanted. What is there in common between the real Social-Democrats of that stage in British working class history (1905-14) and the sham 'social democrats' of today? It is true that the leadership of the British Social-Democrats in 1914 betrayed their own principles by supporting the imperialist war, just as the vast majority of the other European Social-Democratic leaders did (in Britain, however, they were thrown out of their own party in 1916 for their pains). But that condemns the men, not the principles. The men for the most part became advocates of class co-operation: the principles were taken up by the rank and file, generation after generation.

A Bit of History

Can it be that what attracts the new-born, self-styled 'social democrats' is the fact that, when advocating on April 10, 1917, that

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Russian Social-Democrats should return to the old title of 'Communist' used by Marx and Engels, Lenin said: 'It is high time to cast off the soiled shirt; it is high time to put on clean linen'? That would not be surprising. The soiled shirt left behind by the leaders who went over to the defence of British imperialism in 1914 might well suit those who, under the guise of 'mixed economy', are prepared to meet the problem of inflation in 1975 by cutting real wages, promoting more unemployment, creating ruinous conditions for the town halls in respect of schools, house-building and social amenities, while preserving the big monopolies, increasing their profit-making capacity, and maintaining a huge expenditure (approaching £5,000 million) on so-called 'defence', which has brought such benefits to the people of Northern Ireland, Oman, Cyprus, South Africa and elsewhere. If so, here is another precedent for them. 'Social democrats' (without the hyphen) existed long before the SDF and its fellow Social-Democratic Parties of the continent. They were middle class people who wanted to confer benefits on the working class of those days by setting up government-owned workshops in France, to compete with the small masters who then ran industry; or by asking the Prussian state to finance producer-co-operatives, which was the scheme of Ferdinand Lassalle in Germany. But neither wanted nor expected the working class to take over. When the first Social-Democratic *workers'* party was formed in Germany, nearly twenty-five years later, it was as a concession to the workers still under the influence of Lassalle's ideas that the term was first used. Later, after the Paris Commune of 1871 had been bloodily suppressed, and a wave of reaction swept over Europe, the term became a means of avoiding persecution. Here is Engels's story in an 1894 preface to reprinted *Articles on International Themes* which he had contributed to the socialist press of those days:

> The reader will observe that in all these articles, and particularly in the final one, I call myself everywhere not a Social-Democrat but a Communist. The explanation of this is that in those days in various countries people called themselves Social-Democrats who did not in the least inscribe on their banners the watchword of all the means of production passing into the hands of society. In France, social-democrat was understood to mean a democratic republican with more or less stable, but always indefinite, sympathies with the working class, i.e. the people of 1848 of the Ledru-Rollin type and the 'Radical Socialists' of 1874 with Proudhonist leanings. In Germany it was the Lassalleans who called themselves Social-Democrats; but, although in their majority they all more and more became imbued with the consciousness that the socialisation of the means of production was necessary, nevertheless the only officially recognised point in their pro-

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> gramme remained the specifically Lassallean productive association with state aid. For Marx and for myself it was therefore absolutely impossible to use such an elastic expression to indicate specifically our point of view. At the present time the situation is different, and the word perhaps may pass muster, although it remains inexact for a party whose economic programme is not simply socialist in general but directly Communist.

Let not the latter-day 'extremists' be alarmed by those last words of Engels. The pioneers of modern socialism in Britain—Bernard Shaw for the Fabian Society, William Morris for the Socialist League and H. M. Hyndman for the Social-Democratic Federation—had, in their joint message for May Day the previous year, declared that the aim of their parties, one and all, was to arrive, by means of socialising the means of production, at international communism 'on a sound basis'.

Socialism against Toryism

The compliments paid so abundantly to 'moderate' Labour Party leaders by the Tories are thus a glaring case of cupboard love. So much has been done by Harold Wilson and his colleagues to bolster up capitalism in Britain and to depress the condition of the British workers that the economic crisis has inevitably been reflected in a political crisis within the Labour Party. Mrs Thatcher and her associates would hardly be human if they were not rubbing their hands at the possibility that the 'moderates' pursuing Tory policies may be induced to take drastic action against the 'extremists' who want policies inspired by socialism. And to hear Tories praising those who call themselves social democrats today, while denouncing as infiltrators those who press for what the original and famous Social-Democrats stood for yesterday, would make a cat laugh—if the cat knew British working class history. But active socialists in the Labour Party as a rule do know it. At Blackpool, in the first days of October this year, they will do an historic service to their cause if they advise the 'moderates' to look in August Bebel's mirror—and themselves vote for policies which will displease and confound Mrs Thatcher and all her works.

Andrew Rothstein

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IS LABOUR DEMOCRATIC ?

Dennis Canavan MP

AN essential of any democracy is the accountability of those in power to those who gave them power. This accountability is usually of a dual nature. The elected representative is answerable first by law to the electorate—but also owes something to the party which supports his candidature. There must be some degree of accountability to that party.

The reasons for this are fairly obvious. Most people vote not for a particular candidate but for a party or for the policies and record of that party. I, myself, for example, was selected as a candidate just a fortnight before the last general election; most of the 16,698 people who voted for me probably knew very little about me. They did not vote for CANAVAN—they voted for LABOUR, and I owe my election not only to those who voted for me but also, in a very special way, to the Labour Party which selected and promoted me as their candidate.

Not all Labour MPs have always accepted this. Some, like Dick Taverne and Christopher Mayhew, have discovered the hard way that the Labour Party is far bigger than any individual. The truth is that many of the people who vote Labour are more loyal to the Labour Party than some of the candidates who simply make use of the Party to carve out a political career for themselves.

This is not confined to the upper echelons of the Party. At last year's election for the new Scottish local authorities, for example, some official Labour candidates were opposed by ex-Labour councillors, who had failed to win a nomination in the selection process. I know of one such person who, in a matter of months, changed his allegiance from Labour to Independent and then to Nationalist. I also know of several who were elected as Labour candidates and then changed their allegiance but did not have the courage to resign their seats and resubmit themselves to the electorate under their new designations.

All this is, of course, most disquieting, not just to the electorate but more so to the Party rank-and-file. It is very frustrating to go round the streets, door-knocking, canvassing, leaflet dropping and generally knocking your pan in to win an election for someone who afterwards turns round and kicks the Party in the teeth.

This is why the Labour Party constitution and rules must contain not just a detailed procedure to ensure the fair selection of candidates, but also a procedure whereby the selecting body can recall

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their representative if, in their opinion, he does not measure up to their expectations. This does not, of course, reduce the elected representative to a mere rubber-stamping robot. But it does mean that he should take cognisance of his Party's opinion.

This seems to be where the difficulty arose in the relationships between Reg Prentice and his Constituency Labour Party. I have no desire to pronounce judgement on a case which is still *sub judice*, but the treatment by the mass media of the Prentice case has so far been nothing short of a shabby, sordid smear campaign, deliberately designed to interfere with the democratic procedure of a constituency party.

Activism in politics has been portrayed as a vice by those who demand one hundred per cent industrious effort elsewhere. Ill-defined 'moderation' in politics has been unquestionably accepted as a virtue by those who resent lukewarm, half-hearted attitudes in other fields.

But I agree wholeheartedly with Reg Prentice in his appeal for more Labour supporters to join the Party in order to make it more representative of Labour voters. In my time as an agent, I have observed selection conferences where less than ten people attended, even though the successful nominee was assured of a virtual walk-over on to the local council. I have also had to resuscitate branches where the sitting councillor had deliberately stifled recruitment in order to confine membership to a small clique of friends and relatives so that any potential rivals could be kept at bay. It is only by getting the maximum number of committed people to participate in the Party decision-making that the Labour Party can be truly representative and democratic.

The same applies to the Party hierarchy. At present, while a Labour government is in power, we have a rather farcical situation whereby one man, the Prime Minister, is expected to have such a monopoly of wisdom that we give him absolute power to hire and fire members of the government. We, who claim to be the Party of democratic socialism, should not tolerate such a system which makes a mockery of both democracy and socialism.

Neither the cabinet nor the Parliamentary Labour Party should be a law unto themselves, and the best way to improve accountability at that level would be to involve the Party Conference in the selection of the leader and the cabinet. Critics of this proposal trot out the oft-repeated but unproven assertion that the Conference is not representative of Labour voters' opinion. It is my experience that the Conference, despite its imperfections, is a much more represen-

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tative body than the Parliamentary Labour Party and infinitely more representative than the cabinet.

It is also possible that opponents of this suggestion are suspicious of open democracy and would prefer to see the decisions taken by a small cabal rather than as a result of a healthy and open debate.

The Labour Party Conference in October will decide which opinion prevails.

TUC—THE PROSPECTS

Bill Ronksley
President
Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen

THE 1975 Trades Union Congress was held in an atmosphere of economic crisis, falling living standards and soaring unemployment. Unfortunately, the General Council of the TUC is propagating a policy of further cuts in living standards as the solution to the problem. Gone are the assurances given to the 1974 Congress that living standards must be maintained.

Marie Patterson, in her presidential address, claimed that the acceptance of the £6 flat pay increase for a period of twelve months would keep unemployment in check. It is important to note that the government claims the £6 is the maximum but not the minimum, whilst the General Council claims it is a 'norm' and should be paid to all with a salary of less than £8,500 per annum. If most shop stewards were to make such a one-sided and controversial 'contract' with their employers they would be removed from office immediately!

Since the 1974 Congress the General Council has been in almost continuous negotiations on what is called the 'development' of the Social Contract. In other words, the General Council has been negotiating for, and on behalf of, all unions affiliated to the TUC on wages policy and other matters.

At the Congress a number of leading trade unionists complained that there had been little or no consultation with affiliated trade unions. John Lyons, General Secretary of the Electrical Power Engineers' Association, for example, said that this year decisions had been taken on pay policies, pensions and worker participation without proper consultation. Bill Kendall, General Secretary of the Civil and Public Services Association, spoke in a similar vein when he said: 'It is no good preaching to employers on industrial democracy without putting our own house in order.' He went on to point out that the government's White Paper (*The Attack on Inflation,*

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Cmnd 6151) had been written by the General Council without any consultation with the unions.

This apparent lack of consultation with affiliated trade unions by the General Council is a major weakness in the work of that body and should be corrected without delay by the incoming Council.

Undoubtedly, the most important debates at the 1975 Congress were those on the Social Contract and Economic Policy and on Collective Bargaining and the Law.

Arising from the compositing of motions on the agenda, two composite motions (Nos 8 and 9) emerged, with an addendum to Composite Motion No 9. Agenda Item No 60 was left to be voted upon on its own.

Composite Motion No 8 was a strange mixture of support for the £6 and endorsement of the participation of the General Council in discussions with government on the policies required to reduce inflation on the one hand, and declarations of opposition to the use of unemployment or statutory wage controls as instruments of economic policy on the other. The motion also called for an increase in the public works programme, use of temporary employment subsidies where jobs are threatened, a reduction in the price spiral, opposition by the General Council to discrimination against the public and private sectors, and the constant monitoring of the effects of the TUC policy on affiliates.

Composite Motion No 9 expressed criticism of the White Paper of July 11 as an interference in free collective bargaining and a limitation by law on wage costs in the public sector. The motion forthrightly stated that the White Paper treats the symptoms of inflation instead of tackling the underlying causes of instability in the British economy. It then goes on to urge that, in order to maintain employment, Congress should pursue a policy for (a) the introduction of selective import controls, (b) a public investment programme to raise productivity, (c) strict control over prices of essential items in working class family budgets, (d) the lowering of interest rates, (e) the control of the export of capital, and (f) the raising of consumption by increasing pensions, social insurance benefits and social public expenditure. Finally, the motion urged trade unions to take action to achieve (i) a shorter working week and an extension of statutory and annual holidays, (ii) the reduction and elimination of overtime, and (iii) a low pay target of £40 basic rate.

The addendum to Composite Motion No 9, which called for the convening of a Special Congress to be held early in 1976 to consider the effects of government policy and determine future strategy, was,

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in my view, an expression of doubt by the movers, the Civil and Public Services Association, that the present policy being purused by the General Council will endure for twelve months.

Agenda Item No 60 expressed opposition to the use of law in collective bargaining, whether by curbs on pay, protection of employers who break contracts, or the creation of reserve powers for intervention by government.

Jack Jones, who moved Composite Motion No 8, made it quite clear that he was doing so out of loyalty to the Labour government when he said: 'We cannot afford the luxury of destroying the Labour government and handing power to Mrs Thatcher and her associates.'

Ken Gill, General Secretary of the AUEW's Technical and Supervisory Section, adequately replied to the point made by Jack Jones and held by many other left-wingers when, in moving Composite Motion No 9, he agreed that the Labour government must remain, but pointed out that the policies now pursued had always led the Party to defeat, and would do so again through wage control, economic failure and mounting permanent unemployment. He went on to remind Congress that his union had withdrawn a motion opposing the Social Contract at the 1974 Congress in order to help win the general election and because of the promise of Labour in certain fields. 'But what has happened to those aims?' he asked.

Ken Gill then gave the answer to his question, pointing out that there had been no redistribution of wealth; members' living standards had fallen; under the new package living standards would fall even further; instead of a massive house-building programme thousands of building workers had been put on the dole; prices instead of being controlled had risen by 26 per cent while profits were up by 40 per cent; instead of improvements in the health service there had been cuts in almost every sphere of the service; increased public ownership and curbs on monopolies had been promised, but the nationalisation of the shipbuilding and aircraft industries was sinking in the priority list; the Industry Bill had been emasculated at the behest of the Confederation of British Industry; Tony Benn had been demoted sideways for loyalty to the Labour Party Manifesto; instead of defence cuts there had been increases; full employment had been rejected for the first time by any government since the 1930s; public expenditure had been slashed; and now there is a statutory wages policy with sanctions 'to curb the generosity of British employers.'

Clive Jenkins, General Secretary of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, in moving Agenda Item No 60,

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said the current government policy was to legalise the breaking of contracts by employers, and would open the possibility of trade unionists being sent to jail. He called upon Congress to oppose the use of law in collective bargaining.

In the voting which followed, the Chairman of Congress refused to allow a card vote on the composite motions, and declared Composite Motion No 9 to have been lost (the addendum having been withdrawn during the debate), but did concede a card vote on Agenda Item No 60 which was defeated by 2,366,000 votes. The main vote on the General Council's policy was approved by 6,945,000 to 3,375,000: a majority of 3,570,000. This was a far lower majority for the policy of the General Council than many had hoped and was a distinct rebuff to the President who had urged delegates to vote unanimously in favour.

Since Congress, there have been ominous indications that, in spite of the rising unemployment and the £6 limit on wage increases, the high rate of inflation is being maintained. Additionally, the government and the General Council are now in open disagreement as to whether the £6 is an entitlement for all or a ceiling—with the majority of workers getting less than £6.

Living standards are going to be drastically reduced in the coming months should the TUC policy hold. Ray Buckton, General Secretary of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF), was quite correct when he warned that it would be the rank and file workers who would in the end decide whether or not they were going to put up with such an attack on their hard-won living standards.

One pleasing feature of the TUC in recent years is the work done on behalf of pensioners by the General Council and individual trade unions. Pensioners recognise this by their attendance in ever-increasing numbers at the pre-Congress rallies addressed by pensioners' leaders and General Council members. Over 15,000 pensioners from all over the country attended this year's rally at Blackpool and I am sure it played its part in the decision of Congress later in the week to demand that state pensions should be increased to 50 per cent of average male earnings for married couples and 33⅓ per cent for single persons. Jack Jones in moving the motion said that more must be done, and called for the adjustment of pensions on a cost of living basis every three months.

A motion calling on the government to remove those sections of the 1875 Conspiracy Act which militate against workers exercising their rights as trade unionists, declaring opposition to the penalties

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imposed on the two Shrewsbury building workers, and calling on the General Council to use the full strength of the British trade union movement to secure their release, was carried by Congress with only the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunication and Plumbing Union voting against. I am pleased to say that a large number of workers lobbied Congress while this matter was being discussed. In my view the statement made by Tom Breakall of the EETPU was provocative in the extreme, but it must be said that a few of the lobbiers fell for the bait and acted in such a way that quite a number of delegates took exception to their conduct.

Mick McGahey, President of the Scottish Miners, set the whole tone of the debate when he said: 'As long as Des Warren is in prison there is not a trade unionist in Britain who can sleep in peace. Without action on Des Warren it is impossible to echo the slogan "an injury to one is an injury to all".' He then went on to say that the General Council had done everything possible bar calling for action, and that there would not be a miner in prison without action.

Len Murray, General Secretary of the TUC, assured delegates that the General Council was not satisfied regarding the replies of the Home Secretary, and promised to send a telegram demanding Des Warren's release. The General Council will have to do far more than hitherto in order to obtain the release of Des Warren: this is the message which delegates (with the exception of EETPU delegates) spelt out.

With the rapidly deteriorating situation in Northern Ireland the motion submitted by ASLEF, calling for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland which would ban all forms of discrimination on religious grounds and guarantee free democratic elections, was one of extreme importance, and I am pleased to say that Congress adopted the motion unanimously. In moving the motion, Ray Buckton called for a summit meeting between the Irish and British trade unions without delay. Andy Barr, in seconding the motion, said that a similar motion had been carried in 1972 but had never been implemented. We must see to it that Congress *does* carry out the terms of this year's decision. Time is not on our side.

As is well known, railworkers are again threatened with redundancy and a reduction in the rail system. A number of motions were submitted by the rail unions for discussion by Congress, which were subsequently composited with the agreement of the unions concerned.

On arriving at Congress, rail union delegates were informed that the General Council would be opposing the composite motion because some of the principles in the motion were not acceptable

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to the General Council, such as reference to the decision of the government to abandon the Channel Tunnel and the setting up of a National Transport Board with executive powers. In spite of the appeals of the rail delegates, that those parts of the composite which the General Council did not agree with should be indicated by the

EDDIE MARSDEN

Ironically, on the eve of this year's TUC one of its leading figures, in the person of Eddie Marsden, passed away.

Eddie was respected for his tenacity and foresight, a foresight which enabled him to give positive leadership in order to enhance the lot of the working class from which he came and was nurtured.

He was born and brought up in the traditional engineering district of Openshaw in Manchester. One of a family of four brothers and three sisters, like countless others he suffered the pangs of unemployment in the 1930s, with all its privations and sufferings. During the 1930s he joined the Communist Party, his guide and mentor being Harry Pollitt, whose workshop life originated in the same district of Openshaw. Eddie, like Harry Pollitt, was in the forefront of the anti-fascist and unemployment struggles of that period.

A steel erector by trade, with consequent membership of the Constructional Engineering Union, he became the President of his branch of that Union and held the position for 22 years. In addition he was for 15 years on the Executive Council, seven years full time Northwest Organiser and in 1960 became the General Secretary, a position he held until his death.

For 25 years he was a delegate to Manchester and Salford Trades Council, during which time he served for three years as its President. He was also a member of the Manchester Area of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions for 20 years. Likewise he was, for 12 years, a delegate to the Lancashire Federation of Trades Councils.

In the Communist Party he was for over 30 years a member of the Lancashire and Cheshire District Committee, parliamentary candidate for the Openshaw constituency, and for the last seven years, up to his death, was a member of the Executive Committee of the Party.

Recent years have seen Eddie in the forefront in the fight for amalgamation. Whilst his own Union became part of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, he continued to fight for the complete integration and full amalgamation of the four sections that make up the present AUEW.

His passing is a severe blow to the British labour movement, for it can be truly said that Eddie was one of those who put his all into the movement and by this encouraged its continuation by countless others.

Ken Brett

Eddie Marsden's articles in *Labour Monthly* were: *Trade Unions—the Next Round* (1969) and *Mobilisation after May Day* (1973).

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General Council spokesman in the debate but that the other parts should be accepted, this was rejected by the General Council.

The General Council were successful in defeating the composite motion which also included a call for the nationalisation and integration of all forms of transport. As a result of this the railway union delegations left Congress determined that never again would they agree to composite motions which contain different principles; also that Congress has now abandoned the concept that railways have a part to play in a nationalised integrated transport system. I hope that this does not prove to be the case.

In his report on international affairs, Jack Jones outlined what are in the main the progressive policies being pursued by the General Council. It was pleasing to note the support of the General Council for a motion moved by Frank Miller of the AUEW (Constructional Section) which called for a TUC initiative to bring the World Federation of Trade Unions and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions more closely together. Our departed comrade, Eddie Marsden, would have moved this motion had it not been for his premature demise. However, the adoption of this motion as Congress policy is a fitting memorial to his life-long work for working class unity and solidarity.

One of the most pleasing features of the Congress was the lack of rancour in the debates, and the unity of purpose of left and progressive delegates on the majority of issues. This unity was reflected in the move to the left in the election of General Council members. Whilst left and progressive members of the General Council maintained their positions, Roy Grantham, the right-wing General Secretary of the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff, lost his seat to John Morton, General Secretary of the Musicians' Union, who is expected to pursue a progressive role on the Council. Two other progressives newly elected were Bill Keys, General Secretary of the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades, and Fred Dyson, General Secretary of the National Union of Dyers, Bleachers and Textile Workers. Other new members elected to the General Council were Sidney Weighell, General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, Bill Sirs, General Secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation and Reg Birch of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (Engineering Section). They replaced Lord Sidney Greene and Sir David Davies on retirement from the NUR and ISTC, and John Boyd, who was not nominated.

Finally, I must say that the women delegates attending Congress

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played an outstanding part in all the debates, particularly in those related to the special problems of women workers. However, it must be noted that the proportion of women delegates attending Congress was far less than the proportion of women trade unionists in the trade union movement. Far more has to be done to activate the millions of organised women trade unionists. This is a special responsibility for us all—not just the General Council.

MIDDLE EAST—THIS IS NOT PEACE

A. Masri

THE interim agreement between Egypt and Israel signed on September 4, 1975, is the second agreement on the disengagement of their forces in the Sinai. The first was signed on January 18, 1974, three months after the October 1973 war.

Both mention the United Nations Security Council Resolution 338 of October 22, 1973, which formed the basis of the cease-fire and called on all the parties concerned 'to start immediately after the ceasefire the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242 of November 1967.' Both also mention the Geneva conference. The new agreement states: 'The parties shall continue their efforts to negotiate a final peace agreement within the framework of the Geneva Peace Conference in accordance with Security Council Resolution 338.'

This is a rather strange statement in the light of developments in the past eighteen months. The Geneva conference was intended to work out a Middle East settlement with the participation of all the parties concerned, without exception, under joint Soviet-US chairmanship. It has not been reconvened since December 1973. Dr Kissinger, who welcomed it at its opening as a remarkable achievement, has since done his best to avoid its resumption and has managed to persuade the Egyptian government to disregard it too and to accept instead negotiations for bilateral interim agreements, slow step by slow step. As for the Israeli government, it is a moot point whether it inspired the Kissinger method or only agreed to it. It has never made a secret of its dislike of any involvement of the Soviet Union in negotiations for a peace settlement, or of its opposition to any contacts with the representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organisation other than 'on the battlefield'.

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The Israeli-Egyptian interim agreement which has resulted from the Kissinger negotiations has other disquieting features. In March 1975, Egypt refused to give a declaration of non-belligerency, arguing correctly that this would split the Arab ranks and could not in any case precede an overall peace settlement with Israel. At the time, President Sadat went so far as to declare that a declaration of non-belligerency was not possible so long as 'a single Israeli soldier remains on Egyptian territory.' But how is one to interpret the first paragraph of the September 1975 document which states that 'the conflict (between Egypt and Israel) shall not be resolved by military force'? In the words of the *Times* of September 2, 1975, this is an undertaking 'which to the layman sounds remarkably like a statement of non-belligerency.'

No time limit is placed on this undertaking, since the agreement itself has no time limit and 'will remain in force until superseded by a new agreement.'

An alarming feature of the agreement is Egypt's acceptance, under the terms of the special Annex on measures for an early warning system in Sinai, of the deployment for the first time of US personnel on Egyptian territory. The text describes them as US 'civilian personnel', and states that their number shall not exceed 200. But the installations in which these 'civilians' will perform their duties are surveillance stations, visual and electronic, to watch military movements; this must imply not only some kind of military training but a military role of enormous importance, since the US personnel are supposed to report any unauthorised movement of armed forces. *Le Monde* of September 3, 1975, also noted that unlike the UN forces stationed in the area, the mandate of these US 'civilians' does not have to be renewed and cannot be cancelled by either side. They can only be withdrawn by a decision from Washington or by a joint Egyptian-Israeli request to Washington. The introduction of US 'technicians' in the early stages of America's involvement in Vietnam is inevitably brought to mind.

Israeli spokesmen have spelled out the advantages secured by the agreement of September 4. On the strategic position in Sinai, Israeli troops are to withdraw from a slice of territory, but, said Foreign Minister Allon in a television address on August 29, Israel will still occupy 87 per cent of the Sinai peninsula, whereas Egypt will control 5.5 per cent and UN troops just over 7 per cent. Israel is to abandon the Abu Rudais oilfield—from which she has reportedly been pumping up to six million tons a year since 1968—and to allow Egyptian civilians to use an access road to it. But compensation for

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the loss of this source of looted petroleum has been guaranteed by the US government in addition to 2,400 million dollars in new American aid to Israel. Her political gains are also very important: Egypt's commitment to accept the occupation of most of Sinai by Israeli troops for an indefinite period implies a greater freedom of action for Israel in the other occupied Arab territories—Syria, the West Bank of the Jordan and East Jerusalem.

Egypt's gains are not easy to identify. The advantage of Israeli military withdrawal from strategic points in Sinai must be set against the introduction into the battle area of personnel from the leading imperialist state, a state whose friends in the Middle East have so far been limited to Zionist leaders of Israel and some of the most reactionary governments in the area such as the Shah of Iran and the King of Saudi Arabia. Access to the Abu Rudais oilfield may yet prove a disappointment: oilfields operated by enemy hands tend to become prematurely exhausted.

Like all countries of the Middle East, perhaps more than most, Egypt needs peace, a prolonged period of genuine peace, if only to repair the ravages caused to her economy by the military costs of the fighting and of the long periods of no-war-no-peace. Is the new interim agreement likely to bring genuine peace any nearer? No new development in the Middle East can open up the prospect of genuine peace unless it meets two essential requirements: that the territories acquired by force should be surrendered by Israel, and that the Palestinians' right to their own homeland should be recognised and their representatives given equal rights at the conference table.

As things stand, these two fundamental issues continue to be ignored by Israel, and implicitly by the US government. Immediately after the signing of the agreement with Egypt, Israel's official spokesmen declared that there was no possibility of a similar agreement with Syria, as they would not consider any arrangement that would affect their control of the Golan Heights. And they have made it repeatedly clear that they have no intention of meeting representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organisation at any level or on any occasion. At the same time, Israel is going ahead with the installation of new towns and settlements in the occupied territories, among them one in the Sinai, one on the Golan and two on the West Bank of the Jordan, which are now being actively developed.

But no amount of 'created facts', or of Zionist pressure on the US or other governments to set aside the accepted basic principles, can change the real facts that the occupied territories must be

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returned, that there is a Palestinian nation and that it is at the heart of the Middle East problem.

The Labour government has taken no visible action regarding the Middle East conflict since it took office. Apart from the Prime Minister's personal demonstrations of friendship for Israeli leaders, contacts have consisted mainly of quick talks with Dr Kissinger during his brief stops in Britain. Yet there is much that Britain could do to contribute to the global peace settlement to which it is committed.

In November 1973 the Foreign Ministers of Britain and all her EEC partners adopted a resolution asserting that they were 'ready to do all in their power to contribute to that peace,' that a peace agreement should be based *inter alia* on 'the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force' and on 'recognition that in the establishment of a just and lasting peace account must be taken of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.'

The bilateral agreement has settled nothing. The main problems in the way of peace remain. To avoid new war threats in the Middle East and to improve Britain's relations with the Arab world, the present complacent acceptance by the British government of Dr Kissinger's policies must be replaced by active initiatives to bring about multilateral talks towards a genuine peace.

ANGELA DAVIS

Ken Gill
General Secretary
Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers
Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Section

I MET Angela Davis for the first time when she came to London last year. Less than a week after her acquittal, which had been preceded by 16 months in prison awaiting trial, she had embarked on a gruelling world tour on behalf of political prisoners. My union was proud to provide an opportunity for her to meet British trade unionists.

She is clearly a dedicated Communist. But I was also impressed when I met her by her complete lack of affectation and her modesty. It is this latter quality which permeates every page of her autobiography*. Time and again her book reveals an almost painful determination to push Angela Davis and her reputation into the

**Angela Davis: An Autobiography*, Hutchinson, 400 pp, £3.95.

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background and to concentrate on the struggle against oppression. When I spoke to her she constantly referred to her trial—enormous personal ordeal though it must have been—as a focus for struggle, and her acquittal as a victory for the movement and a symbol of hope for other prisoners.

Certainly not for her the *élit*ism of an academic. She identifies much more naturally with ordinary political activists, with the men and women who do the necessary humdrum jobs: on the door-step, on the 'knocker', delivering literature, arguing and recruiting. 'Field-work' is a term which figures constantly in her vocabulary.

Perhaps one good illustration of her attitude is her account of her enthusiastic but somewhat naïve attempt to get involved in the black liberation movement. She met Stokely Carmichael (whom she later describes as opportunistic) at a conference in London in 1967. She asked him for black contacts in southern California and as soon as she returned there she looked up the address he had given her. There was no such number. 'After desperately knocking at door after door,' she said, 'it was clear that no one in the neighbourhood had even heard of Tommy J. Because I was straining towards a permanent involvement, not being able to find this brother depressed me enormously.'

In San Diego she managed to get the addresses of two black community leaders. She telephone one. 'Hello,' she said, 'this is Angela Davis. I have just arrived in San Diego to study philosophy at the university. I have been abroad for the last two years and I want to try to contribute whatever I can to the black movement here. Someone gave me your number. . . .'

At the end of her little speech she recounts there was only silence. 'I did not realise then how I must have sounded—like an effervescent adolescent or like an agent trying to worm her way inside.' The silence continued for a while, then he finally promised to call her. She did not detect very much enthusiasm in his voice and did not really expect to hear from him. She was right.

The book is at its most riveting in its opening and concluding chapters. The description of her two months on the run before she was arrested is full of tension.

> My life was that of a fugitive, and fugitives are caressed every hour by paranoia. . . . Living as a fugitive means resisting hysteria, distinguishing between the creations of a frightened imagination and the real signs that the enemy is near.

Her fear was, of course, very well founded. Sudden death could have reached out from the shadows at any time. She could, after all,

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cite an impressive and gruesome list of black people, many of them not even militants, for whom the policeman's bullet had saved the necessity for any pretence at formal justice. The danger was the greater in her case because she was on the FBI's list of the ten most wanted criminals.

There are many aspects of Angela's book which will be absorbing to British readers: her middle class childhood in a white neighbourhood in Birmingham, Alabama, where bombings of black houses were so constant that it was known as Dynamite Hill. The impact of hostility and violence on an uncomprehending child is very moving. She traces her development through school and university, her growing hatred of the system and the people who heaped humiliation on her and her kind, and her growing consciousness of the need for a political ideology to meet her frustration.

Angela Davis was clearly influenced in the early days by Herbert Marcuse. Speakers like James Baldwin and Michael X had a great impact upon her, but she had the political sagacity to recognise that anger was not enough and that the black liberation movement would have to become part of a revolutionary movement, embracing all working people, to achieve its objectives.

I found the book particularly valuable for the insight it gives into the changing moods and phases of the American black liberation movement—the Martin Luther King civil rights movement of the 1950s, the Black Muslims of the 1960s, and the Black Panther Parties, sometimes competing, which were the product of different states.

One shares her bitter disappointment and disillusionment at the internecine hostilities which developed between some black factions resulting even in gun battles. Indeed, at one stage the lives of Angela Davis and her colleagues were threatened by the Black Panther Party for Self Defence, whose leader, Huey Newton, was himself in prison. It was at that point that she and her friends started carrying guns for their own defence.

She had to face also the male chauvinism of some of the black activists, particularly Leroi Jones and Ron Karenga, who resented black women taking positions of leadership and argued that their role should be to give strength and inspiration to black men.

Understandably, given the background, the black movement incorporated the most disparate groups, and sometimes their only common factor was skin colour. There were those who wanted to eliminate all whites; others wanted to build a separate black nation in the United States; some wanted to return to Africa; there were

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December 1974: Ken Gill welcomes Angela Davis

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ial reception held for her in London by the AUEW-TASS

Photograph by courtesy of the *Morning Star*

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the phoney militant opportunists, and there were others who called on everyone to 'pick up the gun' without seeming to know what they wanted to usher in with the gun. Fortunately there were an influential number like Angela Davis who understood the class nature of the struggle and recognised that socialism provided the only solution. But some were opposed to communism. It was in July 1968, after an internal anti-communist purge in the black liberation movement, that she joined the Communist Party.

Two events followed which were of major significance in her life. The attempt of the authorities to expel her from her teaching job at the University of California because of her Communist Party membership aroused a campaign which made her a national figure. And then came her first acquaintance with the case of the Soledad Brothers. It was to lead to charges against her which could have cost her her life. Jonathan, George Jackson's 17-year-old brother, whilst a spectator at the trial of a San Quentin prisoner, suddenly produced a gun. He was joined by the prisoners and they tried to get away by using the Judge, the District Attorney and some of the jurors as hostages. The police fired on the get-away van, killing Jonathan, the Judge and two of the prisoners and wounding three others. The gun used by Jonathan had been registered in Angela's name and, though she was not present at the incident, she was charged with murder, kidnapping and conspiracy.

She speaks of her relationship with George Jackson, as she has elsewhere, with sensitivity and dignity. It was in the middle of her own pre-trial hearings that she learned of his murder by San Quentin guards. Her grief at such a time might well have destroyed a lesser being. They had never, of course, met outside prison. It was their letters which established their loving relationship. Those same letters were used in the prosecution against Angela. It must have been a particularly refined torture, soon after George's death, to hear long passages of their correspondence read out in the crowded court-room.

Her trial ended at last. 'I looked at the jurors filing in, searching for reassuring signs in their faces. But they were all expressionless as if they had purged themselves of every trace of emotion. I broke out in a sweat and felt my whole body go weak.' She was found not guilty on all three charges. The evidence against her was fragile but the massive international campaign for her release undoubtedly had its effect.

Since then she has campaigned tirelessly for the release of all political prisoners and for the overthrow of the system that killed

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young Jonathan and condemned his brilliant brother George to ten years in prison and ultimately to a bullet in the back.

Angela Davis, and those like her, will not rest until the consciousness of black Americans has been raised to end the discrimination and poverty which distorts American society. Whilst capitalism continues unfettered, hundreds of thousands of young blacks will commit petty crimes and will spend most of their lives in prison. One cannot put it more clearly than she herself did when she said that the real criminals are not the thousands who occupy the prisons of the world but those outside who exploit them.

Angela Davis's autobiography is, without intending to be, a testimony to her strength, courage and compassion. She clearly feels that she has a debt to pay and is determined that the mass movement which sprang up to defend her should be channelled into the much wider struggle to free her people. There is no doubt that the example she has set will make a major contribution to that end.

ACADEMICIAN I. M. MAISKY

January 19, 1884—September 3, 1975

Ivor Montagu

To the newer readers of our journal Academician Ivan Maisky, whose writings on the long struggle to secure legitimate aid for republican Spain in the Non-Intervention Committee, and to bring about that front of the peace-loving nations that could have prevented the war but was thwarted by Chamberlain at Munich, have appeared in our journal, is known as the vivid historian, revealing the truth of events in which he was participant and pinpointing the guilty.

In the future record of our times, he will be known as one of the most outstanding diplomatic representatives of the European scene.

But to the older generation among our readers, and indeed widely among all elder British people, he will be directly remembered as the smiling, cheerful friend, the personification of the Grand Alliance against Hitler, a man who expended his utmost effort to prevent the holocaust and who, when it came nonetheless, endured the perils and privations of the war by our side, as a Londoner. With his twinkling eyes he was always welcome when, often accompanied by his wife, Agnes, he visited factory or air-raid shelter.

Before he became Soviet Ambassador in London, a post he filled

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in the crucial period 1932-43, Ivan Maisky had a varied career always on the side of the people. Born into a liberal family he was, nonetheless, expelled from university in St Petersburg in 1902 for revolutionary activity, and as a young man fought on the barricades in 1905.

Obliged to go abroad, he lived in London from 1912 to 1917. Returning at once in that year, he at first continued his support for the Mensheviks, but the bloody British-backed dictatorship of Kolchak in Siberia opened his eyes. In an open letter to Lenin he courageously acknowledged his mistake. In 1921 he joined the Soviet Union's Communist Party

His later days were spent in the historical writing that will remain classical. Besides his memoirs, and works on Mongolia in 1921, and the history of nineteenth-century Spain, he wrote a vivid and as yet untranslated work comparing the dingy and sordid tsarist Omsk that he grew up in as a boy with the smart and modern city of contemporary Siberia.

Labour Monthly specially mourns him as a true friend of the British people and, in these latter days, a contributor to our journal. From October 1972 to September 1973, with his consent, we printed twelve chapters of his book, *The Munich Drama*.

SOCIETY OF GRAPHICAL AND ALLIED TRADES

The National Executive Council of SOGAT extends to all workers its fraternal greetings. It pledges its continued support for policies directed to creating a democratic socialist society.

W. H. KEYS
General Secretary

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AUEW-TASS

sends fraternal greetings to all delegates to the 1975 Labour Party Conference

We particularly hope that delegates will strive to ensure that Conference policy is worked for by all elements of our movement

Barry Seager
President

Ken Gill
General Secretary

AUEW-TASS, Onslow Hall, Little Green, Richmond Surrey

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THE
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SOCIETY
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ENGINEERS
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FIREMEN

EXTENDS BEST WISHES
TO ALL DELEGATES
ATTENDING THE
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R. W. BUCKTON
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The Scottish miners send fraternal greetings to all delegates and visitors to the Labour Party Annual Conference and express their solidarity with all those struggling to improve the living standards of ordinary working class people in Britain

MICHAEL McGAHEY
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Vice-President
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General Secretary

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We urge support for our policies:

- **The right to work**
- **Free collective bargaining and a planned economy**
- **Equal pay and no discrimination**
- **Job training for all youth**

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UNEMPLOYMENT

Ron Thomas MP

WHILE some will attempt to argue that the present unacceptable levels of unemployment of adults and young people is due to unique features imposing themselves on the economic scene: there is far more evidence to suggest that it is part of the continuing but deepening crisis in British capitalism. The cumulative effects of a *malaise* in our economic and industrial system over the last few decades which has bitten deeper as each temporarily created 'boom' has been followed by a 'slump'.

Taking each period of the economic cycle—call it 'stop-go', or what have you—over the last 25 years, it can clearly be seen that each down-turn in the level of economic activity has meant a higher level of unemployment, and each up-turn has left a higher 'hard-core' of jobless. The 'peak' years of unemployment (*monthly averages*, excluding school leavers) in the last 25 years were (for *Great Britain* only):

1952	1959	1963	1972	1976
350,000	475,000	520,000	850,000	?

At the same time, the completely unacceptable 'peak' total of half a million in 1963 became the acceptable norm from 1967 onwards until it was more or less doubled in 1972, and such a level would have been considered an economic achievement in any one of the last five years.

It is often suggested that the statistics of unemployment taken together with unfilled vacancies provide a fair measure of the pressure of demand, economic activity and likely trends. Given that the relationship of these two statistical indicators has some significance, we have witnessed a continuing deterioration in terms of unemployment and job prospects. In 1952 with a 'peak' unemployment total of 350,000 there were almost 200,000 unfilled vacancies—a ratio of 3½ to 2; by 1963 the ratio had become 5 to 2, and in 1972 there were at least five unemployed adults for each notified vacancy. The latest (August 1975) figures indicate a ratio of almost ten to one.

Apart from the period 1973-74, the last nine years have witnessed a continuing decline in the total level of vacancies and an increasing level of unemployment. The real impact of these general trends across the whole of manufacturing industry has already been well documented. It has also become patently obvious that Keynesian

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macro-economic budgetary, monetary and fiscal policies have failed to arrest the decline in employment and productive capacity. Indeed it is noteworthy that budget speeches have moved away from the once firm commitments on full employment to euphemisms which refer to a stable level of employment, or to measures to reduce unemployment to 'acceptable' levels—levels which were clearly unacceptable a couple of decades ago.

As far as the present crisis level of unemployment is concerned, it is argued that this is due to certain unique and transitory features, and that an expected resurgence in world trade will make a sizeable contribution to the reduction of the numbers unemployed in this country. Apart from having to admit that the resurgence in world trade will not come as soon as anticipated, this hoped-for contribution to employment levels is questionable. It might for example have more validity if it could be shown that Britain's exports had suffered a significant decline due to the lower levels of economic activity in other Western industrial countries; but this does not seem to have been the case. Indeed, leaving aside any comments on the inadequacy of Britain's past performance, exports have held up pretty well during the last twelve months or so. Secondly, and more importantly, it is questionable whether British industry, with its legacy of a capital investment strike over many years. coupled with the effects of a falling demand leading to lower productive utilisation and higher unit costs of production, can grasp the export opportunities which may offer themselves if and when the resurgence in world trade takes place. Such a resurgence could equally well increase the productive utilisation of competitor firms and industries, and without direct controls imports into this country could well increase, while British exports could face stiffer challenges overseas with the obvious consequences for the balance of trade and for employment. In any event, given the kinds of prediction which are being made about the likely levels of unemployment, and if no other direct measures are taken by the government, it will surely require an unprecedented increase in British exports, and/or increase in import substitution, to bring down unemployment to the recent 'acceptable' levels.

One, if not the most, intolerable feature of the present unemployment situation is that according to the latest statistics some 160,000 youngsters have left school only to join the dole queues. In a debate in the Commons in May the Under-Secretary of State for Employment—John Fraser—in referring to the unemployment among young people quite rightly insisted that:

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> The tragedy for the school leaver is that his expectations and ideals are blunted at the very moment when he should be able to begin to realise his potential, at the time when he comes out of school with bright hopes and with the idea of applying what he has learnt at school.

The debate, of course, took place against a background which has since changed dramatically. Understandably, the Under-Secretary of State then held out hope by pointing out that while half a million school leavers entered the labour market in the summer of 1974, less than 8,000 were still unemployed by the end of the year. In the summer of last year, however, there were over 120,000 'young persons' vacancies notified to careers offices: by July of this year the figure had fallen to 37,000. Reports from different regions of the country show that, while the Training Services Agency, local councils, their careers and youth services, trades councils and educational institutions are co-operating to find jobs or to provide training facilities for young people, the general feeling seems to be a mixture of frustration, anger and despair. So far the government's response has been to expand the Community Industry scheme by financing an additional 1,000 places, the provision of a further 7,000 places on industrial training courses, grants to construction industry employers to stimulate apprenticeship recruitment and special training courses for up to 5,000 unemployed school leavers. This could still leave 150,000 school leavers with bright hopes and aspirations blunted. While welcome should be given to the extension of training opportunities, it is already being suggested that at the end of their period of training the young people concerned will be entering the labour market and competing for jobs along with next year's school leavers —'sweeping up' what seems likely to be the limited job opportunities available, and leaving many more of next year's school leavers jobless—or that they will suffer the further indignity of being better-trained unemployed.

It is reported that Michael Foot has demanded that subsidies should be provided to employers to take on young people from the dole queues. This scheme, it would seem, would involve a £5 a week subsidy for six months for each unemployed school leaver taken on by an employer. At a reported total cost of £3 million the scheme would presumably involve some 23,000 youngsters. While welcoming any move of this kind, its inadequacy measured against the enormity of the problem is obvious.

An honest assessment of the total scene can only be seen in terms of peripheral palliatives along with hundreds of individual, well-

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motivated but unco-ordinated, extremely limited, temporary schemes throughout the country. We can surely no longer sit and wait for highly suspect economic gains from a predicted—but now delayed—resurgence in international trade. Labour's election manifesto spoke of a determination to restore and sustain full employment. We can only begin to achieve this aim by an urgent and thorough implementation of the fundamental changes set out in our manifesto. No one should attempt to disguise the crisis we face, but as Tony Benn rightly points out: 'We must use the crisis we have inherited as the occasion for fundamental change, and not the excuse for postponing it.'

RHODESIA OR ZIMBABWE?

John Sprack
Chairman
London Division
Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions

THREE days before the abortive Victoria Falls talks took place, Ian Smith stated that his ruling Rhodesia Front 'never had a policy in Rhodesia to hand over to any black majority government and, as far as I am concerned, we never will have.' That declaration shows the fundamental reason for the conference's failure: the Canute-like intransigence of the white settlers who constitute five per cent of the country's population. The immediate cause of breakdown was the Smith regime's refusal to guarantee immunity to the African negotiating team. But behind that lay the regime's reluctance to enter into meaningful negotiations on the central issue, the hand-over to majority rule.

For whatever tactical differences there are on the side of the African nationalists, they are totally united on the necessity for majority rule to usher in a free Zimbabwe. In this they have the full backing of the African governments as expressed in the statement on April 25 of the Organisation of African Unity:

> The OAU's objective in Zimbabwe is independence on the basis of majority rule. This can be achieved either peacefully or by violent means. Either way, Africa will lend its unqualified support to the freedom fighters led by their nationalist movement—the African National Council. As long as the objective of majority rule before independence is not compromised, the OAU would support all efforts made by the Zimbabwe nationalists to win independence by peaceful means.

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The media have played up, over recent months, South African premier Vorster's role as 'honest broker'. Certainly Vorster has worked assiduously to cultivate the image of the promoter of detente in southern Africa. He appears to have calculated that, whether the conference succeeded or not, his involvement in it as the man appearing to pressurise Smith would help to polish that image.

There are, of course, differences of tactics on the side of the white supremacists. But South Africa continues to provide Rhodesia with assistance which is vital for the survival of the minority regime. South Africa remains in the role of the major breaker of sanctions against Rhodesia; and, despite reports of South African troop withdrawals, Vorster continues to provide substantial military assistance in the way of equipment and opportunities for recruitment.

But if there remain any illusions about South Africa's role as 'peacemaker', they are dispelled by her invasion of Angola. South Africa has attempted to justify this blatant act of aggression by saying troops were sent in to preserve the supply of water from the Cunere Dam. But the Angolan liberation movement, MPLA, has stated that the South African troops have attacked their forces, and the *Financial Times* has speculated that the troops may later be used to wipe out bases of the South West African People's Organisation. Whatever the precise motive, it is clear that the South Africans are prepared to wage war in neighbouring territories in order to further their own interests.

In any event, the Rhodesian regime is itself prepared to increase repression. In June, the regime's 'Minister of Defence' stated that if detente failed in southern Africa, Rhodesia would move into a phase of 'total concentration on the complete eradication of the terrorists and their political adherents.' In the same month, the Karima massacre took place in which 20 African civilians, including nine children, were gunned down by the Rhodesian army, according to the Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice.

Security measures have been intensified in order to stop the exodus of Zimbabweans to Mozambique and Botswana, where they aim to join the freedom fighters. Rhodesian security forces have imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew along the eastern border with Mozambique, with a kilometre-wide free-fire zone; there is a similar curfew along the western border with Botswana. The Rhodesian army boasts that it has already killed six curfew breakers, including two schoolboys. Between 50 and 60 officials and supporters of the African National Council are at present awaiting trial on charges of 'recruiting terrorists', and face the mandatory death penalty if

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found guilty. A new bout of forced removals has begun in the Maramba Tribal Trust Land, 70 miles north-east of Salisbury. Here 4,500 Africans are being moved into 'consolidated villages' because it is an area of 'incipient insurrection'.

The Rhodesian regime have at the same time undertaken a considerable military expansion to guard against the possibility of less overt South African involvement. A rise of 23 per cent in defence spending over the coming year—from £39 million to £48 million—has been announced. Combat soldiers of all ranks are to get a pay rise of 40 per cent. A new 'Rhodesian Women's Service' has been launched, recruiting women aged 18-50 as security force radio operators, air traffic control assistants, clerical and intelligence staff.

In its desperate search for manpower, the regime appears to be encouraging the recruitment of mercenaries from Britain and the US. Advertisements appeared in June in an American newspaper published by a recruitment agency called Phoenix Associates of Boulder, Colorado, and calling for 'adventurous Americans' to serve abroad in the Middle East and Rhodesia. On June 19, the Manchester *Guardian* reported that the head of the British Military Volunteer Force had been asked to recruit by the commander of the Rhodesian army.

As the struggle of the African people of Zimbabwe intensifies, and as the regime becomes increasingly short of manpower, it can be expected that such efforts to recruit will be multiplied. Sharp government action is needed in order to stamp out such direct military aid for the illegal regime.

Perhaps most urgent, however, is the need for action to save the Zimbabweans under sentence of death in the regime's prisons. Over recent months, the regime has greatly increased the number of trials of freedom fighters, and there have been persistent reports of secret executions. The labour movement must put pressure on the Foreign Secretary to revoke all death sentences on political prisoners in Zimbabwe, and to take action to secure the release of political prisoners and detainees there.

With the clear declaration of white intransigence which the liberation movement in Zimbabwe faces, the need for support and solidarity becomes increasingly apparent. In particular there should be greatly increased support for the liberation movement from the Labour Party Southern Africa Liberation Fund.

The need for solidarity work on Zimbabwe will intensify over the coming months. The situation will be examined and plans for campaigning work in Britain discussed at a two-day conference to

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be held on October 18-19 at the Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham (details from Anti-Apartheid Movement, 89 Charlotte Street, London, W1P 2DQ). The labour movement has a vital role to play in solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe. By vigorous and concerted action it can go some way towards compensating for the sordid betrayals of the African people in which successive British governments have been involved.

THE VIENNA TALKS

Harry Sterne

THE talks on the Mutual Reduction of Forces and Armaments in Central Europe* opened in Vienna on October 30, 1973. The preparations actually started in January of that year, and after 14 weeks of procedural discussions and consultations a plenary session of 17 European countries, plus the United States and Canada, was held to establish in the first instance the composition of the participants, subject matters for discussion and the official title of the talks.

From the very outset, the Warsaw Pact countries made themselves clear that they wanted the talks to be comprehensive and to bring in all the European countries involved. They wanted all Nato and Warsaw Pact countries as full participants as well as France. The French government refused to take part in the talks, in spite of the fact that France has troops in central Europe, which, although independent of the Nato command, nevertheless are regarded as allies. Nato pressed for the inclusion of Hungary, but refused to accept Italy. Eventually it was agreed that there would be eleven full participants: Belgium, the German Federal Republic, Great Britain, Holland, Luxembourg, Canada and the United States for Nato; and Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Poland and the Soviet Union for the Warsaw Pact countries. Hungary and Italy, together with six other countries, were therefore in attendance only as observers.

The socialist countries have always insisted that in the preliminary talks of 1973 the two sides had agreed that any cuts must retain 'the undiminished security of both sides'. In fact, US Defence Secretary Schlesinger said, in an interview with *Time* magazine, January 1974, that the two sides had 'something approaching a numerical balance', and that the US wanted to maintain that balance

*The official title of the talks is the 'Mutual Reduction of Forces and Armaments and Associate Measures in Central Europe'.

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of forces in Europe. On March 19 this year, in his turn, Mr George Younger, the senior Conservative spokesman on defence, confirmed that the aim was 'undiminished security for all parties at a lower level of forces and expenditure'. And the Final Act of the Helsinki conference itself stated that the aim in disarmament must be 'respect for the security interests of all states . . . inherent in their sovereign equality'.

When the preliminary discussions regarding suggestions for the official designation of the talks arose, the recommendations of Nato and the Warsaw Pact countries reflected the fundamental differences of approach. Nato used the old argument, based upon unconfirmed evidence, of the superiority in numbers of the Warsaw Pact forces. Consequently, when they talk about 'mutual and balanced force reductions', they are in reality basing their calculations upon an unsubstantiated imbalance, which partly explains why their

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LABOUR MONTHLY FIFTY YEARS AGO

By an overwhelming majority, Congress went on record in favour of a resolution dealing with trade union aims, the three fundamental points of which were:

(1) The necessity of the trade unions definitely organising in conjunction with the party of the workers for the overthrow of capitalism.
(2) A declaration against co-partnership schemes and class-collaboration.
(3) The setting up of factory committees as the best means of securing the unity of the workers in every struggle.

This fact alone demonstrates that the majority of the delegates fully realised the new tasks that they are confronted with. . . .

When the Congress decided to repudiate both the Dawes Plan and the whole basis of imperialism and what it means to the subject nations, it did not do it because it desires to have separation from the Labour Party, or in order to pursue new policies as distinct from the Labour Party, but because of the disgust of the workers with the whole politics of MacDonaldism, and the desire and determination to give an entirely new outlook to the whole of the foreign policy of the Labour Party.

The attempt to use these decisions as indicating a split between the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party is only a misrepresentation of the position, for the strength and basis of the Labour Party are the trade unions, but there is now a growing recognition in the unions that it is not enough to grumble and grouse at the policy pursued by Mr MacDonald and Mr Thomas and then leave them to carry on as usual. The experience of the Labour government has made the unions realise that they must fight on these issues and then force the leaders to carry out the policy that has been decided upon by the whole movement, and where this is not done it simply means that such leaders must be swept aside.

(From 'The Scarborough Conference' by Harry Pollitt, *Labour Monthly*, October 1925)

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horizon has been limited to concentrating on troop cuts, whereas the Warsaw Pact countries describe the talks as the 'mutual reduction of armed forces and armaments'.

At the opening session, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Poland and the Soviet Union proposed that they, together with the seven Nato participants should each make an initial reduction in their armed forces by 20,000, including military equipment, before the end of 1975, and that for the duration of the talks the eleven states directly involved should freeze the number of their armed forces in the areas earmarked for reductions. This was rejected by Nato. Instead, the Nato countries proposed troop cuts of 20 per cent for the Warsaw Pact countries and only ten per cent for themselves, based upon their calculations that as the Warsaw Pact had 900,000 and Nato only 770,000 troops in central Europe, this would redress the balance. A month later Nato called for an intitial cut of 29,000 by the US and 68,000 by the Soviet Union.

The limitations of the Nato proposals became even more apparent when they refused the Warsaw Pact's proposals to include air forces and units equipped with nuclear weapons in the calculations. The leader of the Soviet delegation, Mr Oleg Khlestov, said at the time:

> Contemporary armed forces—land forces, air force and corresponding armaments, including units and sub-units equipped with nuclear weapons—are interrelated. They are a single military complex. . . . The reduction of land forces alone could only lead to a build-up of other fighting services—air force and units equipped with nuclear weapons. . . .

The false argument about the 'imbalance' of forces has been exposed on a number of occasions during the past two decades. In 1962, the US Defence Department under Robert Macnamara carried out the first thorough analysis of the comparative strengths of the Nato and Warsaw Pact conventional forces. The analysis covered all aspects of land, air forces and manpower, and the conclusion reached was that, instead of being weaker, the Nato forces were distinctly stronger. The report received very little publicity at the time, although it was known that the United States was anxious to persuade their European partners to increase their conventional military forces, while the Americans stepped up their supply of tactical nuclear weapons. A similar analysis was produced in 1973. Michael Getler, the *Washington Post* correspondent, June 7, 1973, reported that

> a major new Pentagon study . . . appears to support the administration's message to US allies in Europe that future mutual and balanced East-West troop cuts can be made safely without loss to the allies' national security.

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This conclusion has been reiterated in a more recent report from Brussels in the *Christian Science Monitor*, May 27, 1975:

> Nato defence ministers meeting here last week said existing allied conventional forces are adequate to defend Western Europe. . . . Compared with the Warsaw Pact, Nato is now thought to have more combat-ready fighting men, particularly in the central and southern regions in Europe.
>
> Even the much-vaunted Soviet superiority in tanks now is questioned. . . .

When the talks were opened for the second session, in February 1974, the Nato countries proposed that for the first stage there should only be troop cuts by the United States and the Soviet Union and refused to discuss reductions of the armed forces and armaments of the other countries until some later date, yet to be specified. But the Warsaw Pact countries replied that the reductions should extend to both national and foreign armed forces in the central European countries. The Nato proposals failed to specify whether West Germany, Britain and the Benelux countries would make manpower cuts in the second phase of the Nato plan.

Earlier this year (March 1975) the Warsaw Pact countries put forward a further proposal that, as a first stage, the United States and the Soviet Union should each reduce their troops by 10,000, to be followed in the second half of the year by additional cuts of 5,000 each, plus military weapons and equipment, by Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and Poland on the one hand, and by Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, Holland, Luxembourg, Great Britain and Canada on the other.

For the second stage, the socialist countries proposed that for 1976 all eleven countries should reduce their armed forces and armaments in the areas concerned by five per cent, with the Soviet Union and the United States once again taking the lead in the first half of the year.

For the third stage (in 1977), all participating states to reduce their armed forces and armaments simultaneously by ten per cent.

This too has been rejected.

But the negative approach of some Nato leaders will fail, just as they failed to prevent the success of the Helsinki agreements on European Security and Co-operation or the agreements which resulted from the Willi Brandt *Ostpolitik*.

These agreements, together with the pressure of world public opinion, have made it increasingly difficult for Nato generals and their political counterparts to justify the maintenance of vast military complexes with the accompanying crippling financial burdens.

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These agreements, together with the four-power agreement over Berlin, have laid a sound political foundation upon which positive steps towards disarmament can be taken. Economic, scientific and technical co-operation, the recognition and inviolability of existing frontiers, full diplomatic recognition of the GDR, peace treaties between the German Federal Republic and the socialist countries, and the pressure of world public opinion, have made it increasingly difficult for Nato generals and their political counterparts to justify the maintenance of vast military complexes with their accompanying crippling financial burdens. But disarmament is far too serious a matter to be left to the military experts.

The International Forum for Disarmament and Ending the Arms Race, which is being held at York University from March 28 to April 1 next year, will provide the peoples of the world with an opportunity to impose on governments their demands for disarmament.

During the coming months, a greater awareness must be created of what is going on in Vienna. For a successful outcome of the Vienna talks will have its effect, not only in Europe, but also upon the rest of the world.

TIED COTTAGES

Wilf Page

National Executive Committee Member
National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers

MANY organisations are discussing the consultative document on the abolition of the tied cottage system in agriculture. Rural local authorities and various organisations associated with agriculture have received this document with a request from the government for their observations. The only real authority on the question of the tied cottage is the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers (NUAAW) which, over the years, has had to clear up the problems facing families threatened with court orders and sometimes eviction by bailiffs.

The agricultural tied cottage has its roots deep in history. It is a dwelling a farm worker occupies in consequence of his employment. In the early days of agriculture it resulted in the total labour force being a captive labour force, with the constant fear of losing his home if the worker had a difference of opinion with his employer.

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It only needed the wife of a farm worker to refuse to work in the farmer's house, or a son of the farm worker to refuse to work on the farm, for a situation to develop where the family would be evicted. If the worker had a difference of opinion with the employer on trade unionism or politics, the farmer would merely question his standard of work, terminate his employment and serve notice to quit his house.

It was not until the Farm Workers' Union was formed in 1906 that any form of organised opposition to the tied cottage emerged. George Edwards, the founder of the Union in Norfolk, took the issue of the tied cottage to the TUC, winning support from the wider trade union movement by pointing out that the existence of the tied cottage was an inhibiting factor in winning new recruits to the Union. Farm workers were fearful of openly joining the Union as their employers might take action by throwing them and their families out of their homes. For this very reason many of the branch secretaries were people who supported the Union but did not work in agriculture. The late Edwin Gooch, for many years President of the Union, was a journalist by profession.

Throughout the life of the Union it has campaigned for the abolition of the tied cottage. Many lobbies of members of parliament have been organised. National and local conferences of the Union have unanimously called for the abolition of the tied cottage. Numerous representations have been made to government ministers.

Resulting from this activity, legislation has been introduced giving farm workers greater security of tenure by empowering the courts to suspend possession orders granted to farmers, in order to give the worker more time to find alternative accommodation. With the serious shortage of houses in the countryside this legislation has merely had the effect of prolonging the period of distress.

The case of Mr J. S. Bone of Little Hassock, near Andover, Hampshire, is an illustration of such cases. Mr Bone took up employment as a tractor driver with Fountain Farming Ltd on April 1, 1974. He was dismissed from employment on February 10, 1975. A possession summons was subsequently issued and heard by the County Court on April 4, 1975, when a possession order suspended for six weeks was made. At a subsequent hearing the possession order was suspended for a further 28 days. Finally, the court indicated that no further time could be given, and the bailiffs announced their intention to enforce the eviction order on August 28. During this period the Union had made representations to the Basingstoke District Council, with no success. Eventually the Union organiser

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obtained an offer of a house through a housing association. This avoided having the bailiffs moving in to evict the family of father, mother and three daughters, aged five, eight and nine years.

It is not possible to estimate the effect upheavals of this kind have on the families of agricultural workers, particularly on the children who may be in the midst of school examinations.

The abolition of the agricultural tied cottage has been Labour Party policy for many decades. In discussions with the home policy sub-committee and the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party, the NUAAW pointed out that, of the 140,000 full-time, regular farm workers, approximately 70,000 live in tied cottage accommodation. The NUAAW arranges representation in some 600 cases annually.

With such a scattered labour force, an unknown number of cases will appear in court involving workers who are not members of the Union. A further number of workers will uproot their families and move to another farm with tied cottage accommodation available, in order to avoid being dragged through the courts. They have not escaped the system, but have merely moved to another tied cottage, hoping the situation does not again occur. Finally a number of cases never come to court—where Union action has prevented eviction.

Following the discussions with the Labour Party, the Union's case has been accepted in its entirety. The February 1974 and October 1974 general election manifestoes carried a firm undertaking that, if elected to office, the Labour government would give the occupants of agricultural tied cottages security of tenure in line with the Rent Acts. Immediately the general election results were declared, the Union entered into direct discussions with the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Minister of Agriculture. Joan Maynard MP, the NUAAW-sponsored candidate, also started to take action in the House of Commons. Unequivocal assurance was given to the Union that the necessary amending legislation would be amongst the government's priorities for the second session of parliament.

This assurance could mean the end of the existing tied cottage system: the Union is not celebrating any victory until a study has been made of the legislation on the statute book.

The nearer we get to the Queen's speech, outlining the business of the next session of parliament, the more intense are the efforts of the farmers' union (NFU) which is implacably opposed to the government's intentions. The farmers' case for retention of the system is that it is essential to agriculture, as replacement workers cannot be obtained unless the farmer has a house to offer. The

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NUAAW has answered these and many other arguments put up by the farmers.

In reality the campaign to retain the tied cottage is based on the realisation that a farmer will have to pay wages and offer working conditions to compete with other industries. There can be no compromise. The tenant of a farm cottage must enjoy security of tenure. This means normal tenancies under the existing Rent Acts.

BOOKS

The Socialist Challenge
Stuart Holland
Quartet, 414 pp, £5.95

THIS IS an important book, an overall political-economic statement of the perspectives facing the labour movement as it moves towards socialism. Three facts make it necessary to treat this book seriously. Much of its argumentation was presented by the author to various committees of the Labour Party National Executive Committee: Mr Holland's expressions of indebtedness to an impressive number of left-wing personalities in the trade union and political movements indicate the extent to which they have contributed their views to the issues discussed; finally, it seems clear that the Labour election manifestoes of 1974, which marked a significant departure from previous Party election manifestoes, are seen to have much in common with the thinking of this book.

The opening paragraphs point to similarities in the thinking of the French, the Italian and the British left, arising out of their respective analyses of the total historical situation, and draw broadly similar conclusions from the analysis. It proceeds to examine the Keynesian position on the regulation of the economy. Keynes proceeded on the basis that there were broadly two major factors: the state and private industry, to which the terms macroeconomics and microeconomics are given. The state could regulate the movement of the economy and correct its periodic imbalances with measures having to do with the extension and the contraction of credit facilities, and these measures would effectively control the economy without either taking over private industry by nationalising it, or by imposing specific restrictions upon it.

Holland first demonstrates that the Keynesian checks and spurs, sacred to governments for a very long period, were at the best imperfect in their operation. Today, he argues, they are irrelevant: a new economic formation—the multilateral company—has come into the field, to which he ascribes the economic category mesoeconomics (i.e. occupying a position somewhere between existing national private industry and the state). He gives an indication of the extent of the growth of multilaterals both in Britain and in the capitalist world, and reports several economic experts as saying that something like 300 such multilaterals are moving to the position where they can control the whole of the economies of the 'Western' world. He examines the special advantages of these multilaterals, operating at one and the

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same time, through subsidiaries in different countries; how one subsidiary can sell to another at prices artificially arrived at; how advantage can be taken by the multilaterals of incentives to invest offered by the state; and how balance sheets can be rewritten so as materially to distribute profits shown from high taxation countries to low tax areas, even to tax-avoidable areas. The development of new international credit agencies like the Eurodollar and the Eurobond also favour the multilaterals, and many of these deploy resources greater than those of many states, and have powers which place them beyond the reach of the existing state machine.

The ideas of Anthony Crosland, exponent of the New Fabian ideas of the post-war world of right-wing Labour, the concept of the mixed economy, in which capitalist and state-held industries live harmoniously in a competitive environment, which plays down the role of the socialist sector, are here subjected to cricism.

Many other issues relevant to a thesis which looks at the problem of the advance to socialism are looked at: questions like the role of the state, the international aspects and implications of the struggle (is it possible to build socialism in one country?), the questions of social and industrial democracy, and many more.

There are omissions: a loud silence about the role of the Communists in Britain; about the relations between a socialist Britain and the existing socialist world outside, especially the Soviet Union. And others. But the book could contribute to a dialogue throughout the left in Britain: the party which produced *The British Road to Socialism* can usefully discuss the ideas here set down; and the resulting exchanges can provide a basis for an agreed strategy for socialists and Communists, as such discussions have had a similar result across the channel.

BEN AINLEY

Do Trade Unions Cause Inflation?—Two Studies
Dudley Jackson, H. A. Turner and Frank Wilkinson
Cambridge University Press, 128 pp, £1.50

THE FACT that this work ends by proposing that the unions should fight simultaneously for wage and price *cuts* as the best means of combating inflation and bettering their members does not mean that it is void of intelligent discussion and comment; rather that, without appreciating and taking into account the role of monopoly, the multinationals and the other parasitic elements in capitalist society, one is lead into unreality on a grand scale.

A. B.

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FLOODING THE BOOKSTALL

A REGULAR contributor to our fund has pointed out that the caption on our picture last month should have given Stalybridge in Cheshire, not Lancashire. No excuses—we apologise. He goes on to comment that the girls' shawls and clogs are things of the past, and 'there are few weavers now left, but in International Women's Year it is perhaps well to remember that the women trade unionists in the cotton industry have had a record of struggle second to none.'

That reader, having read of our office flood episode, assured us that his dealings with *LM* early in the year had given away nothing of our difficulties. Our efficiency, as far as he was concerned, was unimpaired. We hope this is the general experience of our readers, though we know there were some who had cause to complain—as we most certainly did—at the disaster.

More recently we have been making great efforts to get a multiplicity of small packets of *LM* into the hands of sellers at this year's TUC and Labour Party conferences. Our request that space be made available for a few copies to be displayed on the TUC's bookstall was even turned down with the kind remark that it wouldn't be easy to sell from the bookstall anyway, since our sellers would be handling so many copies in the hall. We should be able to give a report next month of how the sales have gone.

Our fund figures below (contributions received during August) were again too low to clear the danger level. We look to our readers—every one who can possibly help—to get us back into the £100-plus region. We know July and August are hard times to raise good collections, but recovery after the holiday period is not automatic: every penny has still to be won out of the conviction that *LM* is part of our movement, as necessary to an active trade unionist as a membership payment. So, remembering those marchers in 1928—whether you come from Lancashire or Cheshire or anywhere else —please get weaving.

£81.21

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Our thanks to you all.

Nicola Seyd

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Learie Constantine, Gerald Howat. Allen & Unwin, 250 pp, £7.

Robespierre, George Rudé. Collins, 254 pp, £4.95.

Fisheries Resources of the Sea and their Management, David Cushing. Oxford University Press, 88 pp, £3.50.

Big Business: Theoretical and Empirical Aspects of Concentration and Mergers in the United Kingdom, Sam Aaronovitch and Malcolm C. Sawyer. Macmillan, 338 pp, £10.

Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union: 1941-1945, M. M. Minasyan and others. Progress (Central Books), 450 pp, £3.50.

Moses Kotane: South African Revolutionary, Brian Bunting. Inkululeko, 310 pp, £3.

For their Triumphs and for their Tears, Hilda Bernstein. International Defence and Aid Fund, 72 pp, 50p.

Che's Guerrilla War, Régis Debray. Penguin, 156 pp, 60p.

Aneurin Bevan, 1897-1945, Michael Foot. Paladin, 528 pp, £2.50.

Aneurin Bevan, 1945-1960, Michael Foot. Paladin, 684 pp, £2.50.

Whose Jerusalem? The Conflicts of Israel, Ronald Segal. Penguin, 286 pp, 90p.

Our History Pamphlet 62: 1945 Year of Victory, George Barnsby. History Group of the Communist Party, 38 pp, 25p.

Arms, Jobs and the Crisis. Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 20 pp, 15p.

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WANTED—secondhand books on Marxism, socialism, labour history, race relations, women's liberation, Collet's London Bookshop, 66 Charing Cross Road, London, WC2. Tel: 01-836 6306.

SOCIALIST LIBRARIES and pamphlets bought. 01-876 7254. Hammersmith Books, Liffords Pl., SW13.

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BRIGHTON and the General Strike by Ernie Trory. Price: 20p plus 8p postage. Five copies 85p; ten copies £1.50; then *pro rata*. 57 Tivoli Crescent, Brighton, BN1 5NB.

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